

HON. MARCY KAPTUR
Â OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, America's economic strength can be measured by her trade accounts, whether we are exporting more goods and services than we are importing; and if we do export more than we import, America's economic strength grows. But when America imports more than she exports, her economic muscle weakens.

This chart that I brought to the floor this evening shows that since the mid-1970s, when America began signing very unbalanced trade agreements with other countries, every single year America began to import more than she exports. This last year of 2005, we had a historic trade deficit with the world totaling over \$750 billion, three quarters of \$1 trillion. Indeed, it was \$725 billion more in imports coming into our country than exports going out. This is not an insignificant amount. This has never happened to the United States of America before.

In January, America imported this year \$68.5 billion more in goods and services than we exported. This was an all-time high just for 1 month, an increase of over 5 percent from last December. This year in agriculture alone for the first time in American history since the Pilgrims settled, the United States will import more food than we export. Think about that. Think about what that means for America's independence, our birthright of independence.

According to Alan Tonelson at the U.S. Business and Industry Council, America's condition cannot be explained by high oil prices. That makes these numbers worse, but Mr. Tonelson says the January trends spotlight the continued decline of U.S. national competitiveness in ``industries of the future," such as high-tech hardware and services, and throughout our vital manufacturing sector.

Today, many companies, airline companies, automotive parts companies like Delphi, a data corporation in my own district which just announced bankruptcy, all of them are teetering and a sign that imports are displacing what America used to make and send elsewhere. Today's report by the U.S. Department of Commerce suggests that the U.S. current account trade deficit for this year will probably surpass \$1 trillion, \$1 trillion; and that is on top of the \$9 trillion of public debt that has been amassed since 2000 in our country. Truly, we are a republic teetering financially, losing our independence because somehow we have to fund these gaps in what is owed publicly and in this trade account deficit. And we are borrowing in order to make up the difference, and we owe interest on those borrowings.

In order to sustain such an unprecedented and rapidly accumulating deficit, we are dependent on this massive borrowing from abroad and selling off valuable U.S. assets just like a fire sale, like you go to a pawn shop. To sustain a deficit like these, we are dependent upon investment by foreign agents like Dubai Ports World, which is in the headlines again today.

Our country cannot be secure, cannot be secure, from the defense standpoint or financially under conditions like these. And yet after 12 years of evidence of the failure of trade agreements like NAFTA, Trade Representative Portman continues to negotiate trade deals like the CAFTA agreement. This year the administration intends to bring new trade agreements under the same failed model like the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement and an agreement with Colombia. Peru, a country that employs child labor, and Colombia, where labor leaders are more likely to be killed and are, summarily, more of them than anywhere else in the world.

How can our workers compete with these conditions? How can our small business people, how can our salaried executives compete with undemocratic places, no transparent legal system, no banking system that really functions openly?

The answer is we cannot. We simply cannot. So we are outsourcing everything to these places. And that is why imports are rising faster and faster and the people in those other places cannot afford to buy what is made by the people of this country who have sustained a middle-class life-style until now. Despite modest economic growth in our country, middle-class workers are not seeing any rise in their income. That is right: inflation-adjusted income for all households except the very wealthiest is flat. This may be the first generation in America when our children do not live as well as their parents before them. And you know what? The American people know it. They know it.

This is not the American Dream. This is the American nightmare.

Please sponsor the Balancing Trade Act, H.R. 4405, that would require action by the administration when we sustain these kinds of continued trade deficits with other nations. It is time for America to become independent again. It is time for America to restore her promise to all of her people.